IN THE CLAIMS:

Amend claim 1 as follows:

1.   (Preliminarily amended) A method for distributing and redeeming electronic promotions to a plurality of consumers through a communications network, comprising:

maintaining an account for each consumer, <u>said account having a limited direct identification of said consumer with said account to exclude identification of said consumer by name</u>;

associating each consumer account with a unique key;

permitting access to said consumer account upon presentation of said unique key over said communications network;

presenting promotion choices of items available at at least one store associated with said unique key over said communications network;

recording selections of said promotion choices made by said consumer over said communications network;

receiving data of purchased items by said consumer at said associated store; and

reconciling said selections and purchases to credit said consumer.

26.   (Preliminarily amended) The method of claim 1 wherein said consumer account maintaining step [has] <u>having</u> a limited direct identification of said consumer with said account <u>by an address</u>.

Please cancel claims 27, 42-58.

Please add new claims 59 - 89 as follows:

59.   (New) A method for distributing and redeeming electronic promotions to a plurality of consumers through a communications network, comprising:

maintaining an account for each consumer;

associating each consumer account with a unique key;

5   permitting access to said consumer account upon presentation of said unique

6   key over said communications network;

           accepting offered promotions over said communications network of at least one

8   item for presentation to consumers, said offered promotions from a promoter of said item;

           presenting promotion choices from said offered promotions of items available at

   at least one store associated with said unique key over said communications network;

11   recording selections of said promotion choices made by said consumer over said

12   communications network;

13   receiving data of purchased items by said consumer at said associated store; and

14   reconciling said selections and purchases to credit said consumer.

1   60.   (New) The method of claim 59 wherein said accepting offered

2   promotions step further includes at least one criterion for said promotion of said at least one

3   item.

1   61.   (New) The method of claim 59 wherein said accepting offered

2   promotions step further comprises offering said offered promotions from said promoter

3   through a GUI.

1   62.   (New) The method of claim 59 wherein said presenting promotion

2   choices step comprises presenting specific discounts on specific items.

1   63.   (New) The method of claim 59 wherein said presenting promotion

2   choices step comprises presenting a purchase incentive for one or more items available in said

3   associated store, said purchase incentive unrelated to said one or more items.

1   64.   (New) The method of claim 59 wherein said presenting promotion

2   choices step comprises presenting specific prices on specific items.

1   65.   (New) The method of claim 59 further comprising the step of sending

2   data of said recorded selections to one or more of said associated stores within a preselected

3   time limit after said recording selection step so that said data is sent prior to purchase of items

4   by said consumer at said associated store.

66. (New) The method of claim 65 further comprising the step of indicating discounts credited to said consumer account at the time of purchase of items by said consumer at said associated store.

67. (New) The method of claim 66 further comprising the step of invalidating said sent data of said recorded selections to one or more of said associated stores within a preselected time limit after said time of purchase of items by said consumer at said associated store.

68. (New) The method of claim 65 further comprising the step of inferring a likely associated store where purchase will occur by said consumer.

69. (New) The method of claim 68 wherein said inferring step comprises inferring said likely associated store from the data of previously purchased items by said consumer.

70. (New) The method of claim 68 wherein said inferring step comprises inferring said likely associated store from said unique key.

71. New) The method of claim 65 wherein said one or more associated stores are preselected by said consumer.

72. (New) The method of claim 59 further comprising the step of sending data of said recorded selections to said associated store upon purchase of items by said consumer at said associated store so that discounts credited to said consumer account are indicated at the time of purchase of items by said consumer at said associated store.

73. (New) The method of claim 59 wherein said receiving data of purchased items step occurs upon purchase of items by said consumer at said associated store.

74. (New) The method of claim 59 wherein said receiving data of purchased items step occurs within a preselected time limit after purchase of items by said consumer at said associated store.

75. (New) The method of claim 59 further comprising the step of presenting data of previously purchased items by said consumer over said communications network to said consumer.

76. (New) The method of claim 75 wherein said data presenting step further comprises formatting said data to industry standards.

77. (New) The method of claim 59 wherein said consumer account maintaining step has a limited direct identification of said consumer with said account.

78. (New) The method of claim 77 wherein said consumer account maintaining step excludes identification of said consumer by name.

79. (New) The method of claim 78 said consumer account maintaining step comprises:

maintaining a database of only said key, at least one financial institution account number, and purchasing history for each consumer.

80. (New) The method of claim 79 wherein said financial institution account number comprises a credit card number.

81. (New) The method of claim 79 wherein said financial institution account number comprises a debit card number.

82. (New) The method of claim 79 wherein said financial institution account number comprises a smart card number.

83. (New) The method of claim 77 wherein said consumer account maintaining step includes a name of each customer.

84. (New) The method of claim 79 wherein said reconciling step further comprises:

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communicating said credit to a financial institution account through said financial institution account number so that said financial institution account may be credited.

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85.   (New) The method of claim 59 further comprising the step of offering promotions to said consumer derived from received data of consumer purchases.

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86.   (New) The method of claim 85 wherein said promotion offering step comprises targeting large aggregates of consumers.

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87.   (New) The method of claim 85 wherein said promotion offering step comprises targeting individual consumers.

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88.   (New) The method of claim 87 wherein said targeting step comprises inferring said individual consumers from purchasing and promotion selection data of said consumers.

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89.   (New) The method of claim 88 wherein promotions offered to a targeted individual consumer include promotions for products and services based upon purchasing and promotion selection data of said consumer, said promotions for products and services unrelated to items actually purchased by said consumer.

REMARKS

Consideration of the patent application, as preliminarily amended, is respectfully requested.

By this preliminary amendment, the applicant has cancelled claims 27 and 42-58, so that only pending claims 1-26 and 28-41 remain. The applicant has also added new claims 59-89. Therefore, by this amendment, claims 1-26, 28-41 and 59-89 are now pending. These claims had been canceled in the parent case.

In the parent case, claim 1 had been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) for anticipation by U.S. Patent No. 4,882,675, which issued November 21, 1989 to S. Nichtberger *et al.* The Examiner stated in the final Office Action, mailed August 16, 1999: